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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2006

In Today's Papers

Victory Day Celebrations

All papers reported that the 84th anniversary of Victory day was celebrated yesterday throughout the country, in the Turkish Republic of Cyprus (TRNC) and in Turkish communities throughout the world. The new Chief of General Staff General Buyukanit hosted a reception at the Gazi Orduevi. Milliyet reports that, at the reception, Land Forces Commander General Ilker Basbug told journalists that acts of the PKK terrorist organization would not stop all at once and that its financial sources should be cut off. He ruled out issuance of a general amnesty. Responding to a question regarding the US assigning a PKK coordinator, Gen. Basbug said that "Turkey and the US are still not on the same page regarding the separatist organization. This issue has not shaped up yet, be patient. In the coming days it will become clear. One should not kill every step right at the beginning. Developments should be evaluated." Aksam reports that at the reception, General Buyukanit, Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul discussed troop deployment to Lebanon. Yeni Safak quotes US Ambassador Ross Wilson as saying at the reception that the PKK will not be taken as an interlocutor and it is out of question that Special Envoy Ralston would sit at the same table with the PKK.

Parliament to Vote for Troop Deployment on September 5

Hurriyet, Sabah, Milliyet, Yeni Safak, Cumhuriyet and others: Today's papers report that the AKP Government is expected to forward the motion for troop deployment in Lebanon to the Parliament today. Sabah reports that the motion will not mention the number of troops but will note that Turkish troops will stay in Lebanon for one year.

The motion will be taken to the parliament general assembly on Tuesday, September 5, on the same day UN Secretary General Kofi Annan comes to Turkey. Cumhuriyet reports that EU sources told the paper that Turkey's active military and political role in Lebanon would have positive impact on its EU entry process.

Praising the decision to deploy troops, columnist Cengiz Candar

commented in the conservative Bugun: "Of all the participants in the peacekeeping forces, Turkey holds a unique position, carrying with it every justification for its involvement in the force. Besides being a part of the Mediterranean, Turkey is a part of the NATO collective security system as well as a part of the transatlantic system. In other words, given all of these characteristics, Turkey cannot simply say 'Lebanon is not my business.' By moving forward on the deployment of troops in Lebanon, Turkey has positioned itself with a global dimension which it really deserves. Unless you are an archaic leftist, an Islamist, obsessed with political Islam's victory in the Middle East, or are a rigid nationalist, there is no need to be disturbed by the decision to send troops."

US Assistant Secretary Dan Fried Comments on Terrorism
Milliyet reporting on an interview conducted by CNN-Turk, writes that US State Department Assistant Secretary Dan Fried urged Masoud Barzani to end the PKK presence in Northern Iraq by saying that "it is the responsibility of the Kurdish Administration in Iraq not to allow PKK to take shelter on its soil, nothing can justify this." Fried also said that Turkey will notice soon an increased coordination and precautions on the PKK issue.

US State Department Deputy Spokesman Tom Casey on PKK and Special Envoy
Sabah, Yeni Safak, Zaman and others: Speaking at the Daily Press Briefing, the US State Department Deputy Spokesman Tom Casey said that the US has long considered the PKK a terrorist group and underlined the importance of coordination to eliminate the PKK threat by saying that it is something that "requires work by all parts of our governments, not only from the political or diplomatic side, but also from the side of coordination among our security forces. General Ralston is very well qualified both to work the political aspects of this as well as the security dimensions of the

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problem." Responding to a question whether US Special PKK envoy Ralston would hold talks with the PKK, spokesman Casey said that the special envoy will coordinate efforts between the US, Turkey and Iraq and that it was "out of question for us to hold talks with the PKK or any other terrorist organization."

Columnist Mustafa Balbay of the leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet remains skeptical about the appointment: "Despite reassuring statements from Washington, the real life situation of the PKK indicates more difficult days ahead for Turkey. First of all, the US is well aware of the fact that the PKK is a primary force in northern Iraq even stronger than the Barzani and Talabani forces. The PKK will not take orders from them. The actual coordination process will lead to a negotiation with the Iraqi administration which will turn into making contact with the PKK one way or the other. There is another significant development following the announcement of the US special envoy on the PKK. The PKK is very pleased with the appointment because it hopes to sit at the table with Turkey. And who provides such hope you may wonder? The US."

TV Highlights
NTV, 7.00 A.M.
Domestic News

Q NGOs in Turkey ready to stage protests against government decision on troop deployment in Lebanon
Q Tensions escalate during August 30 celebrations in Istanbul when a group of activists, attempting to protest the government decision to send soldiers to Lebanon, are mistaken by the crowd for PKK sympathizers
Q One person was injured in explosion in a rubbish container in Mersin

International News

Q UN Secretary General Kofi Annan demanded yesterday that Israel lift its air and sea blockade of Lebanon, but Israel rejected the call
Q 53 people die in bomb attacks in Iraq.

Q Five Palestinians died in a continuing Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip

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WILSON